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WEB-BASED PLATFORM FOR ENHANCING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Abstract: The aim of this research is to investigate possibilities for supporting tourism development by employing the Web as the leading source of information particularly important in times of increased number of competitors in tourism market. For this purpose, the paper argues that creating personalized recommending system, as a way out in meeting ever-changing tourists' preferences towards different aspects of tourism is very important. So, the research makes an attempt to justify the necessity of designing a web-based tourism portal in order to assist tourists in identification of their ideal holiday through a recommender. The results of this empirical evidence point that the proposed approach provides satisfactory performance since it reports on positive experience as well as accurate recommendations and guidelines. So, the development of such software module being organized as on-line social network (OSN) contribute generally in increasing the awareness for tourist destination, thus boosting tourism development. It assists all interested parties in planning their travel on more intelligent way by generating a personalized list of favorable and tailor-made items. Finally, the research strongly alarms relevant tourism-actors that the time has changed and that on-line experience has shifted from searching and consuming to creating, connecting and exchanging.

Keywords: *tourism; web-portal; OSN; recommenders, Macedonia.*

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